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THE MISSING SUBJECT OF ACCELERATIONISM

By Simon O'Sullivan , 12 September 2014

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As with utopian modernism and its attempt to separate Geist from Reason, today's accelerationists have run into the old problem of differentiating their version of progress from that of capitalist development itself. In his review of the *#Accelerate* reader, Simon O'Sullivan identifies the crux of the problem as the absent theory of the subject

1. Accelerationism: Left vs. Right

Terminators and Replicants aside, what kind of subject is implied, or called forth, by the recently re-animated politico-philosophical idea of accelerationism (defined in the Introduction to the recently published *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader* as 'the insistence that the only radical political response to capitalism is … to accelerate its uprooting, alienating, decoding, abstractive tendencies' (p.4))?[i] On the face of it what has become known as left accelerationism involves something more immediately recognisable: a communist subject, or a subject that is the product of collective enunciation. In the 'Manifesto for Accelerationist Politics' (MAP) by Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, first published online and one of the key texts of the aforementioned Reader, we can recognise a call of sorts for a 'new' kind of (human) subject, the result of the knitting together of 'disparate proletarian identities' (p.360), and one capable of 'abductive experimentation' in to how best to act in the world (p.361). The MAP itself derives from Marx's understanding that from within the capitalist mode of production other forms of non-capitalist relation might be engendered. Indeed, from the MAP's

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perspective, technological advances are to be welcomed – accelerated – not only because this is the only realistic grounds on which to address the iniquities of capitalism itself (on its own terrain as it were), but also, precisely, because such an acceleration might offer up platforms for a new and different kind of subject to emerge.

Right accelerationism, on the other hand – at least as incarnated in the writings of Nick Land – would seem to call for an end to this subject altogether (the figure drawn in the sand as Michel Foucault once had it), in favour of a specifically non-human machinic process that continues alongside, and is more or less oblivious to the human. The Science Fiction caricatures mentioned at the beginning of this review essay are merely the anthropomorphic avatars, or human masks, of this advancing 'techonomic' development, to use Land's term (naming the 'twin-dynamic' of technology and economics) which is also simply the orientation of capitalism per se, and which, from a human perspective, at least on the left, tends towards something distinctly dystopian.[ii]

But things are more complex than this, and there are grey zones between these two poles. Zones which are also to do with the place of the human subject or, indeed, with what the human might become within an accelerationist agenda. Reza Negarestani, for example, calls for attention to be given to an inhuman impulse that is nevertheless 'within' the human, when the former names the commitment to an on-going experimental but also rational process – of conceptual navigation – and the latter names the fetters on this (the 'folk' (everyday and common-sensical) sense of a human self – or 'myth of the given' – that can limit this other adventure insofar as it relies on pre-existing categories and definitions). 'The Labour of the Inhuman' (the title of Negarestani's essay in the Reader) then involves the continuing interrogation of the category of the human itself, a program of endless revision and updating that is itself a commitment to always reassess previous commitments.[iii] This, we might say, is the human's self-overcoming through reason – albeit of a specifically experimental and speculative type.[iv]

Ray Brassier's philosophical Prometheanism – as laid out in his essay 'Prometheanism and its Critics' – likewise identifies a constructive and future-orientated impulse within the human, one that is likewise rule-based and rational and that, ultimately, might be pitched against all-too-human preoccupations such as finitude.[v] Indeed, finitude is seen less as a determining, and limiting, factor of any given subjectivity per se than, again, as a fetter on the Promethean impulse itself (as we shall see this desire to go beyond finitude is a refrain of accelerationism in more or less all its articulations).[vi] As with Negarestani then there is both a critique of the human (again, as folk or 'manifest image' and thus as fetter), and an affirmation of it (as sapient rational being (as 'scientific image') and, as such, potentially unbounded).[vii]

Certainly, these last two are not thinkers of the right but, on the other hand, it is hard to see how their writings might be bought in line with a typical Left agenda insofar as the latter is often premised on preserving a certain category – even a folk image – of the human against those forces that seek to alienate and *de*humanise. In fact, as I suggested above, even the MAP itself implies a category of the human somewhat at odds with these more extreme positions (not withstanding Robin Mackay and Armen Avanessian's comments in the introduction to the Reader which sets up Negarestani and Brassier in particular as the conceptual think tank of the MAP, charged with giving it a certain philosophical depth and trajectory). As we shall see in a moment however there is a precedent, in Marx and other Marxian writers, for identifying and affirming a kind of Promethean impulse, and certainly a faith in machines (including science and reason) as emancipatory, although it is not clear if this always entails the end of specifically human preoccupations such as finitude.

Nick Land's most recent writings, including the essay by him in the Reader, align themselves more specifically and drastically with an extreme non-human impulse, ultimately with what Land calls a 'teleoplexy' (a '(self reinforcing) cybernetic intensification' (p. 514)) for whom the human subject in its typical and traditional form is more or less irrelevant or, at worst, a temporary obstacle. Here the issue with left accelerationism (for Land at least) is that it maintains categories and types, if not whole social systems and political cultures, that operate as regulators and compensatory measures – at best, diversions from, at worst fetters on – a process that tends towards something left accelerationism can never fully endorse: the absolutely non-human and specifically capitalist impulse towards 'Techonomic Singularity'. The politics of neoreactionism that follow from this theoretical position have been expounded by Land elsewhere and certainly need addressing by those more directly involved in these debates (that is, by left accelerationists), but the worse that can be said of the thesis as presented in the Reader is that it is technologically determined, and that there is no place for a human subject however the latter might be figured. Land's essay is also written in a certain style – economic and rigorous, but also polemical and irreverent – that is at once difficult and compelling.

In the sense of affirming a certain impulse or, even, an intelligence – rational and technological – for which the human is but a platform of sorts but also a fetter, Land is, however, not so far from Brassier and Negarestani. Indeed, we might say that Land, in some senses, is the progenitor of these two positions – or, more generally, that these three are variations on the same Nietszchean theme of the death of God and the ends of the human subject, at least as the latter is traditionally understood. Or, to put this another way, each of these thinkers is profoundly anti-theological if we understand theology as positing, as Brassier might have it, a sanctity of the given as against the made.[viii] In fact, Land looms over many of the accelerationist writers – at least those collected in the Reader. Iain Hamilton Grant, Mark Fisher, Luciana Parisi, Robin MacKay (one of the co-editors) and Ray Brassier were all at

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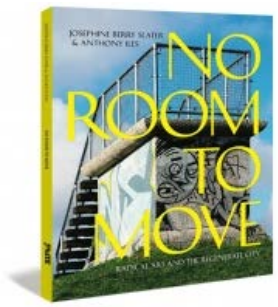

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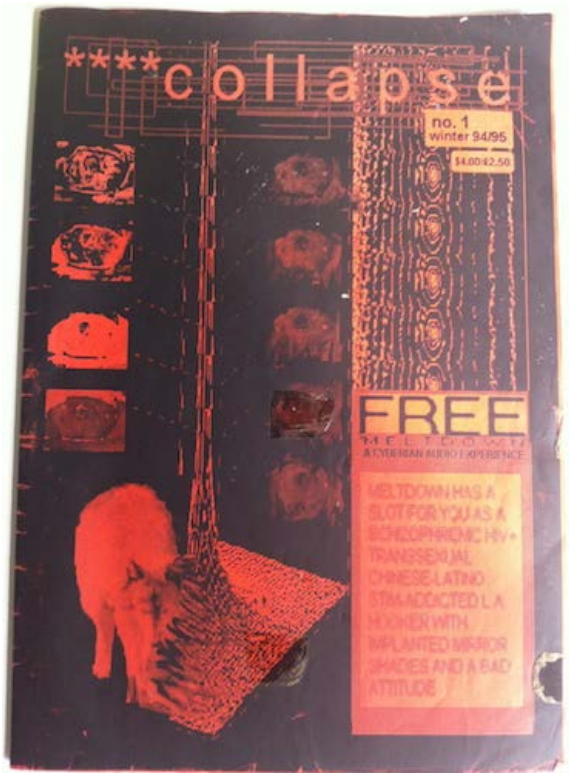
least partially intellectually formed in that moment at Warwick University where Land taught in the 1990s, (though Brassier, strictly speaking, is of a slightly younger generation). Many of these were also part of the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), a kind of para-academic site (before these became popular) or research Laboratory set up by Sadie Plant, but driven by Land after Plant's departure from academia. Although accelerationism, as presented in the Reader, tends towards a certain dry rationalism in what I take to be its two chief philosophical articulations – Negarestani and Brassier – it nevertheless develops from something less dry and more libidinal, a certain scene that was as much about the body, and affect, as it was about reason.



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One variation of the accelerationist focus on reason in the form of a technology produced by humans (or even a technology produced by a technology produced by humans) but that is ultimately irreducible to them (and, indeed, outruns them) is what might be called the 'algorithmic turn'. Here, again, we can identify two impulses which cannot be simply reduced to left and right, but which nevertheless echo the two positions mapped out above: one of resistance and one of acceleration.

In terms of resistance we might cite any number of cultural/critical works that position themselves against not just web 2.0 but the whole increasing automation of lived life and its subservience to algorithm driven technologies. The autonomist writings, such as those by Franco Berardi, would be a case in point. Here there is a tendency to lament technological process and call, instead, for 'alternatives' to it: collectives and community, friendships, more immediate human 'contact' and, crucially, the exploration of a different *time* for the subject. Indeed, the strategy here might come under the umbrella term of deceleration (although Berardi himself has also attended to various forms of technological experimentation and, in early writings, might be said to exhibit some accelerationist tendencies). The salient point is that technological development in general is increasingly impinging on our psycho-biological being (insofar as, for a writer like Berardi, technology might be said to move in an explicitly non-human time). As opposed to the position that the first historical section of the Reader sets up (more on which below), we can recognise in Berardi's writings a more typical Left position (albeit one that is cross-bred with something more Deleuzian) on technology – specifically when it is entangled with capitalist imperatives – as alienating. In fact, to push this a little further, we can recognise some more Adornian aspects of Critical Theory here as well: Technological development as producing alienation and the melancholy subject. Indeed, we might say that this, Marxism as (melancholy) critique, has hitherto trumped Marxism as Prometheanism, at least in the contemporary Academy where the former has tended to take the form of ideology critique and then deconstruction.

In terms of the second impulse – the Promethean and accelerationist one – such alienation, if it can still be understood in these terms, is held to be in some sense an enabling, if not emancipatory, dimension of capitalist subjectivation. There is no 'authentic' human to be uncovered beneath these increasingly omnipresent technological prostheses and algorithmic logics. In terms of this orientation, in the Reader we have Luciana Parisi (herself a member of CCRU), and her interest, pace

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Whitehead, in inductive reasoning and, more generally, a progressive speculative reason that is in some senses the product of algorithmic logic itself, and which dovetails with the 'intelligence of materials' it operates on (p. 404). Here, the algorithmic turn of society and culture is not to be lamented, nor should we mourn the loss of an algorithm-free subject. Indeed, it is this very computational logic, and more generally the acceleration of automation, that has, as it were, freed the powers of speculation from an all-too-human subject and human-centred technology.

Image: cover of *Alien Underground*, Version 0.0, 1994

Tiziana Teranova is also indicative of this orientation, though perhaps more cautious and with a more immediately recognisable Left agenda of building platforms – or 'repurposing' those we have – that are specifically collective in nature ('a machinic infrastructure of the common', or, more simply, the 'Red Stack' (p.396)). In this, Terranova's essay in the Reader is in line with the MAP itself which calls to the Left in general to attend to the technological developments of capitalism and, specifically, the various abstractions performed by it (such as the algorithmic turn) in order to confront it on its own terrain and, indeed, to utilise its own logics and technics against it. Crucially this implies a critique of what the authors of the MAP call horizontalism (and its sometime accompaniment, localism). A crucial subject to which I will return below.

In terms of what I have said so far about left versus right accelerationism, and to conclude this opening section (that has discussed the last grouping of essays in the Reader), it might be claimed that the most instructive text on accelerationism in general is Land's polemical annotation of the MAP (which is not in the Reader, but available at Land's *Urban Futures* blog (http://www.ufblog.net). For not only is it Land who is the key accelerator for accelerationism, but also through picking apart some of the claims and tenets of the MAP, line by line, his commentary points to certain resonances, but also makes some delineations, between Left and Right (for example on the understanding of what, precisely, capitalism is). It also somewhat foregrounds the forms – online blogs and other social media – in which these debates are currently developing.

2. History, Context (and the Missing Subject)

Before moving on, it is worthwhile reviewing the context that the Reader sets up if only to get a more historical sense of what the object 'accelerationism' actually is. In general the genealogy is that of a left accelerationism; thus, in the opening section, 'Anticipations', we are presented with a key extract from Marx's *Grundrisse*, 'On Machines'. It is in this text, to simplify drastically, that we find one of Marx's important arguments about the contradictions of capitalism: the idea that fixed capital, in the guise of machines, necessarily reduces labour time (in order that increasing surplus value might be extracted), but in so doing allows the worker more time to be directly involved in the productive process, not as a cog in the machine but as directly producing their own life. Indeed, the machine (and Marx includes in this definition science and reason), in freeing the worker from a certain kind of labour, itself produces the specifically social individual (in terms of an individual with certain knowledges, psychic competences and so forth), and with that, we might say, it has despite itself brought about the conditions to end the worker's alienation. It is this idea – that from within capitalism and through machinic development comes emancipation – that is a corner stone for both left and right accelerationism.

Marx also makes the point in the extract that although the machine is produced under capitalist relations, it need not exist solely in this type of society, *as* fixed capital. There is no reason, Marx seems to be suggesting, that a non-capitalist system would not use machines precisely for the freeing up of labour time *without* the concomitant draining off of surplus value in the form of capital. This projection forward to a use of machines in a post-capitalist society informs the MAP itself and, more generally, left accelerationism.

The second text in this opening section is an extract from Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, 'The Book of the Machines' which, although written nearly 150 years ago, reads as strikingly precedent and contemporary. It encapsulates many of the themes of accelerationism, but also foregrounds many of the reservations, if not fears, of the Left towards technological development and determinism (indeed, it reads like a script to the *Terminator* films). In this sense the inclusion of Butler introduces a note of caution in the Reader's otherwise affirmationist selection of texts. It also introduces a further key accelerationist theme, although not one explicit in the MAP itself: that of fiction, or even, we might say, of *fictioning*. In fact, Butler's text is precisely Science Fiction *avant la lettre*. I will also be returning to this below.

Following the Butler text is an extract, 'The Common Task', from Nikolai Fedorov's *What was Man created For?* (1906). This text presents the Promethean impulse in perhaps its most explicit form in the attention given to the need for an escape plan – from the earth and its gravity, but also from death itself. Finally in this first section, there is an extract – 'The Machine Process' – from Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904), which presents the thesis that any progressive politics must follow, and indeed accelerate, current technologies, or what it calls 'business', rather than simply offering up palliatives to the evil symptoms produced by the latter. The resonances with the MAP and its own vision of a renewed Left that takes up some of the technological developments of capitalism are clear.

The Reader then jumps to the aftermath of 1968, and, in a second section titled 'Ferment' presents a selection of texts from the early 1970s. Here offered up as a beginning is an extract from Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectics of Sex*, in which Firestone predicts an overcoming of the dialectic of the aesthetic and technological modes of culture – itself, crucially, determined by the dialectic of sex (sexual difference) – to be brought about by the increasing technological development of society (the realisation of the aesthetic in the technological as it were). The ultra-left thinker Jacques Camatte is next who, in an extract from *The Wandering of Humanity*, offers a technical reading of Marx, somewhat against the grain, which attends to Marx's own at times cryptic comments about the revolutionary aspects of capitalism. In both the Firestone and the Camatte texts the seeds of capitalism's demise are found within capitalism itself, when the mode of production outruns the specifically capitalist relations of production.

A text by Gilles Lipovetsky, 'Powers of Repetition', is also included in this section and attends to capitalism's experimental and deterritorialising character, but also its accompanying impulse to slow things down so as to extract surplus value. In fact, this is a refrain of the Reader, that capitalism has two moments or movements: an inventive, experimental deterritorialising force; and then a secondary operation, an apparatus of capture on those flows so as to extract surplus value (reterritorialisations). The accelerationist position might be characterised as simply the intention not to critique the secondary moment (as in ideological and institutional critique), but to affirm the first, to plug in to the flows – to 'accelerate the process' as *Anti-Oedipus* famously has it.

Indeed, it is at this point that the Reader moves into more politically ambivalent territory with Deleuze-Guattari and Jean-Francois Lyotard (both of whom were key thinkers for Land and CCRU in general). In Lyotard's case we have a general statement of, and from, his *Libidinal Economy* (and, more particularly, a passage that addresses our investment in, and enjoyment, of capitalism), as well as the extended review of *Anti-Oedipus* and Lyotard's own take on 'Desirevolution'. With Deleuze-Guattari we are offered an extract from *Anti-Oedipus* and specifically the section on 'The Civilised Capitalist Machine' that ends with the key accelerationist phrase cited above. Crucially, with Lyotard and Deleuze-Guattari, we also get the critique of psychoanalysis and, more specifically, Oedipus, which is figured as one of the key apparatuses of capture on the flows. Oedipus here operates as a blockage to a potentially wilder libidinal economy.

Image: performance of Carolee Schneemann's *Meat Joy*, 1965

The genealogy ends with a third section, 'Cyberculture', that is comprised of a more recent selection of texts from the 1990s, including those by Land himself (on cybernetics as desiring-production), Iain Hamilton Grant (with an Anti-Oedipal 'reading' of *Blade Runner*), and Land and Sadie Plant together (one of the highlights of *#Accelerate*), and, finally, texts by CCRU which, as well as anything else, are testimony to the energy and libidinal drive of that particular future-orientated moment at Warwick. In fact, it is the style in particular that is compelling with the texts in this section. At the time they were like nothing else going on in the Academy (and others have certainly remarked that Land, for one, was about 10 years ahead of his time), but even today they have a certain speed and economy of expression – and, crucially, a kind of dark humour and irreverence that marks them out. Reading them again, laid alongside the Lyotard and the Deleuze-Guattari, one can see, at least in part, where the energy came from – that peculiar post-1968 moment with its project of unleashing desire.[ix] Indeed, one can clearly see the larger project – attended to also in Mark Fisher's contribution at the beginning of this section (as in other of his writings) of a libidinal materialism ('instrumentalising libido for political purposes' as Fisher puts it (p.340)), or simply, of schizoanalysis. This is something that is conspicuous by its absence in the accelerationist essays themselves (Fisher's excepted) although the Introduction to the Reader does attempt to inject some libidinal intensity in its synopses of the latter essays (more on this missing subject below).

Although one can certainly follow, and largely agree, with the genealogy offered to this particular scene (even if, as the editors' Introduction also suggests, other texts could easily have been included – for example those from a certain kind of cyberfeminism – such as Sadie Plant's solo writings, or the group VNS-Matrix; or from what became known as Afrofuturism – as in Kodwo Eshun's writings) it must also be said that this particular moment of cyberculture owes as much to other matters, both non-academic and non-scholarly, for its inception and evolution. Jungle, for example, and the whole desiring-production of the dance floor with its accompanying synthetic supplements (perhaps it is the attention paid to this in the Plant-Land text that makes it so compelling).

Indeed, in reading these texts again one gets the sense that there was something else at stake besides a technological/rational Prometheanism, or that CCRU operated at least one step removed from this explicitly philosophical trajectory. Certainly, the emphasis on reason and rationality (in Negarestani and Brassier for example) if not absent here (and certainly all those involved in that scene were rigorous readers of Kant and Spinoza), was itself accompanied by an affective charge – bodies, understood in the most general sense, and encounters – and an interest in other spaces and places outside of philosophy, at least as narrowly construed. The editors' Introduction does attend to this, pointing to the importance of the 'collective pharmaco-socio-sensory-technological adventure of rave and drugs', and more specifically, of 'dystopian strains of darkside and jungle' themselves re-mixed with Ballardian Science Fiction narratives and samples from *Terminator*, *Blade Runner* and the like. But, certainly it is worth restating here that these experimental conjunctions (that involved a definite outside to the Academy and a whole host of *different* kinds of subject) produced a very specific energy and intensity that, it seems to me, were crucial to that moment (p.21).

This connection to an outside, and a kind of forcing of encounters, was perhaps most evidenced by the *Virtual Futures* conferences of the 1990s that pulled in Deleuzian thinkers such as Brian Massumi and Manuel Delanda but also other kinds of writers and practitioners as varied as Robert Anton Wilson, Stelarc, o(rphan)d(rift>) and the aforementioned VNS-Matrix – and, at the one I attended in 1995, more fringe techno DJs (such as TechNET and others).[x] It also included a very particular *performative* element, with talks by Land and Plant for example accompanied by multi-media presentations that were a million miles away from the ubiquitous PowerPoint presentations of today's professionalised academia. A kind of experimental and, it has to be said, sometimes loose and collapsing mash-up of live body and voice with digital sound and image. Indeed, conference proceedings at that particular event were carried out to a sound-track of techno and jungle (the decks were in the main conference room), and, throughout there was a plethora of flyers, fanzines and other

printed materials in constant circulation that evidenced a more explicit connection to an outside, even an underground.[xi] As the editor's point out in their Introduction it was also 'musicians, artists and fiction writers', rather than academics and professional philosophers, that were ultimately most influenced by this specifically trans-disciplinary scene. All of this has been written about by those more directly involved (like Mackay), but I offer these remarks as an addition to the genealogy the Reader itself produces; and to suggest that there was something important in these more affective, and aesthetic, aspects of that scene – especially for those less involved in philosophy per se.[xii] A certain intensive charge that left an after-image (at least for this writer). It was this together with the compelling philosophical content that one found at Warwick in the 1990s, and which is preserved in the texts collected in this third section of the Reader (as the editors suggest, a writing *with* rather than a writing *about* its subject).[xiii]

One further thing to note in this selection of texts is the presence of fictioning or, in CCRU's terms, 'hyperstition' – 'fictional qualities making themselves real'. Land's essay for example, as well as being a theoretical polemic is also itself a Science Fiction that loops back on itself – about agents from the future impregnating the present, re-engineering the past so as to bring about said future. It is this more non-philosophical aspect that is also particularly compelling about the Reader in general (and, rightly is given attention by the editors in their Introduction) and gives it the charge of fictioning reality itself (the Reader as hyperstitional entity that helps construct the object/narrative of 'accelerationism'). Indeed, in this sense, one of the key essays in the Reader, from the previous historical selection of texts, is by J. G. Ballard and makes the claim that, today, all realism (and might we not include philosophical realism here?) is necessarily a form of Science Fiction.

3. Mapping the Diagonal: on the Production of Subjectivity

If Land's online critical commentary on the MAP, alongside his own essay in the Reader, constitutes the Right's response to the manifesto, then another commentary – this time by Antonio Negri (also first appearing online but reprinted in the Reader) –constitutes the main response by the Left and works to further align left accelerationism with the communist project (broadly construed). That said, the Negri essay also points to various caveats, for example around the question of the MAP's own technological determinism, and ends with a comment about various key omissions from the MAP such as a consideration of the commons and questions to do with the production of subjectivity (including 'the agonistic use of passions' (p. 378)).[xiv]

Indeed, for myself, this last theme is perhaps the most obvious missing subject of accelerationism, at least as the latter is presented in the last section of the Reader, where the focus is specifically not the subjective or, more particularly, the affective make up of subjectivity – with the essays either claiming the latter's obsolescence, especially in the wake of the 'rise of the machines', foregrounding only the rational subject, or, as in the MAP, offering no detail on this crucial area beyond a passing swipe at 'affective self-valorisation' (p.351).[xv]

I mentioned Badiou in a footnote above and, in relation to this orientation, it seems to me that he, rather than Deleuze-Guattari, is the true progenitor of the inhumanism of accelerationism insofar as he is also explicitly not interested in the affective make up of subjectivity (and, indeed, follows a kind of war of attrition against the human animal).[xvi] Badiou might then be said to be on the side of accelerationism, at least in part (if it makes sense to take sides) since he affirms a militant process, or truth procedure, that is alien to the human animal itself. That said, Badiou does precisely offer a theory of the subject (as local instance of this procedure). Indeed, this is at the core of his philosophical oeuvre and, as such, it might be argued that Badiou himself offers us the missing subject formation of accelerationism (formalised as matheme). Certainly Negarestani's labour of the inhuman has something in common with both Badiou's fidelity to an event (in *Being and Event*) and his 'Living for an Idea' (in *Logics of Worlds*) insofar as it also involves a commitment to an idea – even a matheme – of what the human might become.

Image: *Plastique Fantastique* summon all the fantasies of the people!, Wysing Art Centre, Cambridgeshire, 2013

That aside, it does seem to me that accelerationism's (or indeed Badiou's) non- engagement with the affective complexities of subjectivity means it offers only a partial picture of the issues and problems at hand – and, indeed, of their possible solutions. For capitalism is not just an abstract inhuman agency 'out there', instantiated in forms of technology, and so forth (that is, as a supra-molar entity). It is also 'in here' – producing our very subjectivity on what we might call a molecular level. Capitalism goes all the way down, determining our affective states, as well as our very desires and the contours of our inner most worlds. Subjectivity, then, is not solely a rational business in this sense or, at least, those aspects not involved in the project of reason are also crucial to our sense of who and what we are – or, indeed, what we might become.

Any subjectivity 'beyond' capitalism (even one produced from within the latter) will have to deal with this, and get involved in the whole complex mess of being alive, not least addressing the various affective tonalities that capitalism engenders (from an omnipresent, ambient anxiety, to resentment and depression, to all out paralysing fear). It will not be enough to take on – or commit to – a new set of ideas, or put our faith solely in technological progress – subjectivity has to be *produced* differently at this level. It is in these terms and for this reason that I pointed to the importance of the affective aspects of the Warwick scene above (and especially its more non-philosophical aspects). It offered something *different* (at least in terms of the moribund Academy, and the humanities more generally at that time). This is not to say that giving attention to this area is the most important aspect of any ethico-political project today, or indeed that the scene in Warwick could operate as any kind of blueprint (its affective aspects were no doubt themselves complex and contradictory), but it is to say that without an account of (and experimentation with) the affective production of subjectivity, any diagnosis of the problems produced in and by capitalism, or strategy to deal with them, remains *too* abstract (or, remains abstract in only a partial way).

It is important to note that this does not imply the reinstatement of a phenomenological self that experiences the world (an individual that *has* the affects) nor, a straightforward vitalism that is pitched against a colder abstraction. Affects – or becomings – are themselves abstract. They take the subject out of themselves – or they involve the irruption of something different – non-human – within the subject (when 'human' names a very particular historical configuration and self model). Indeed, molecular encounters – that might well involve the biological and chemical in conjunction with the technological and digital – produce unforeseen compounds that themselves are generative of other forms of thought and, indeed, themselves determine what thinking itself might be (and become).[xvii] Some of these ideas (and experiments), seemed to be at play at Warwick in the 1990s, where libidinal flow and economies of affect were certainly foregrounded, and, again, contrasted to a more straightforwardly human (and phenomenological) subject.

To a certain extent all this is also the business of schizoanalysis especially as Félix Guattari understood it – as a form of expanded analysis and accompanying experimental technology of the

subject. Schizoanalysis was, is, a materialist therapeutics aimed at freeing an impersonal desire that has been repressed by the theatre of Oedipus, but it also, crucially, involves exploring and experimenting with other sorts of non-human encounter as well as other models of and for a non-typical (and non-standard) subjectivity. What we find in books like *Chaosmosis* and *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* is an attention to the other registers of the subjective beyond the rational or indeed the symbolic in general (and in this specific attention to the affective and the molecular, as well as in his general non-philosophical perspective, it seems to me, that it is Guattari, rather than Deleuze that is the chief interlocutor of Badiou).[xviii]

In relation to the MAP and, indeed, accelerationism more generally, we also find subjective modellings that are more adequate and appropriate to the advanced operations and technics of late capitalism itself. Guattari could not, I think, be called an accelerationist thinker (not least because of his interest in collectivity and community, in the molecular *and* the horizontal). But in his writings he certainly suggests that a post-capitalist future – what he calls (in 'On the Production of Subjectivity') the 'Third Assemblage' or simply the new aesthetic paradigm – is only possible via a passage through capitalism (the 'Second Assemblage'), and, indeed, by utilising its various insights and subjective developments.[xix]

Guattari could also not be called 'folk', but he was certainly interested in the pre-modern – or what we might call, following Raymond Williams, the residual (those aspects of a previous hegemony that have not been incorporated into the present one).[xx] Indeed, in the essay mentioned above, Guattari quite obviously rules out any simple return to a pre-capitalist animist culture (the 'First Assemblage'). Things are more complex than this: any 'return' to this kind of immanence would need to be informed by its passage through the transcendent apparatuses of the Second Assemblage. More generally, it is then this complex mapping of the present – that it contains a multiplicity of different *times* (pre-modern, modern and post-modern, or, to switch registers a little and use more of William's terms: residual, dominant and emergent) that Guattari could bring to the MAP's own analysis. In relation to this we might also refer back to my earlier comments about autonomist strategy and recognise that there are times to accelerate, but also times to decelerate. It is this working out of a kind of subjective ethico-political strategy, a relational proportionality of different times, but also of different *speeds* (the latter understood in a Spinozist sense as an experimentation with different temporal refrains), that seems to me crucial in addressing today's homogenising neoliberal landscape that tends to produce and operate on and at a standardised 'capitalist temporality'.

Guattari's ethicoaesthetic writings, albeit difficult and sometimes dense, also involve a pragmatics and evidence a certain practicality (indeed, the experiences at *La Borde* clinic, that 'regime of heterogenetic encounter' as Guattari called it, were instrumental in mapping out the contours of the aesthetic paradigm). We can only produce our subjectivity through *practice*, the interaction with other 'means of expression' which might then free us from our various impasses, in Guattari's terms, opening up 'new universes of reference' and, ultimately, new ways of being in the world. Without this active participation in the production of subjectivity we are destined to be determined by – and subject to – 'transcendent enunciators' as Guattari called them, which, in our own time, means capital.

In passing we might note that this is to bring Guattari in line with some of Michel Foucault's late work on technologies of the self and, more specifically, Foucault's remarks about the 'Care of the Self' in which the decision by the subject to self-apply certain ethical codes brings about a kind of space of freedom.[xxi] Of course, Foucault's late writings were also conditioned by the desire to find a way out of the impasses of contemporary neoliberalsm (the power/resistance problem) or, in accelerationist terms, a situation of capitalism when there is no apparent outside.

It is here then that I would like to explicitly suggest my rejoinder to the accelerationist critique of the horizontal and local which they regard as retreats and withdrawals, a 'folk politics' not able to deal with the abstractions of capitalism. It seems to me that this critique although relevant on one level makes a category error. For, following Guattari, the horizontal – could we even perhaps say the transversal? – is also about addressing the production of subjectivity on an affective and molecular register. It is, to use Foucault's terms again, a technology of the self. To dismiss such strategies as not adequate to the workings of advanced capitalist abstractions is to not fully understand that these abstractions need also to be addressed as they incarnate themselves in our very lived lives – and 'on' our very bodies – again, at a molecular and affective level. Indeed, how can a genuinely emancipatory politics be constructed without this attention to the body, understood in its expanded Spinozist sense as a vast resource in itself (as well as one that is increasingly technologically supplemented), but also as that which power operates on?

Although this is to foreground thinkers like Guattari and Foucault it is also worth pointing out that this turn to the body and to the construction of the self in all its complexity was itself a result of identifying certain inadequacies of Marxian analysis.[xxii] This is not the place to map out that particular genealogy – the turn to other non-Marxist, feminist, post-colonial and often explicitly psychoanalytical theories and practices – but, certainly, the MAP, in focusing on the economic and technological, on capitalism as a cold object of analysis, neglects some of these developments and has, thus, been rightly critiqued for a certain blindness in these respects.

Such work – on the production of subjectivity – crucially, involves collectivity, or the production of

collective enunciation in Guattari's terms, hence the importance Guattari gave to communities and groups (and to the idea that the self is itself a collectivity or ecological entity). To a certain extent accelerationism – especially in its articulation as *#accelerate* – is itself a collective enunciation, operating especially through new social media, and, to a certain extent, it is also the production of collective labour. Nevertheless, it seems to me that this must be accompanied by other kinds of work that involve foregrounding those aspects of ourselves and our lives not 'available' to social media (indeed, despite the dismissal by the MAP, it is precisely 'communal immediacy' that is required for this kind of work (p. 351)). This is not to completely follow Berardi et al, but it is to say that collectivity *and* practice are crucial in the production of subjectivity. In fact, a form of retreat – strategic, temporary – is a necessary precursor to this work: a turn away from the more explicit and dominating speeds and demands of capitalism, from the market and the media (and especially social media) means that attention can be given to an alternative production of the self.[xxiii] A withdrawal from the most apparent and obvious capitalist relations can mean an actual engagement with capitalism as it is instantiated in us on a more molecular level and thus also that attention can be given to the production of possible aberrations, and new territories, that might also be located here. This is not an escape, but a direct confrontation, and experimentation, with the molecular workings of capitalism in our very being (in this sense, when we are in the world we are distracted – not the other way around).

Crucially however, this double movement – an apparent withdrawal from the world and a more obvious engagement with it – are not altogether mutually exclusive, but must be thought together. How, for example, to use social media in a way that is not all encompassing (and, ultimately, overwhelming) but that is also not Luddite (what new forms of relation might it allow for example?). When is it appropriate to decelerate (in order to operate and interact with the world at a different speed, and/or deal with the intricacies and molecular make up of our subjectivity), and when to accelerate (to follow the abstractions of capital, to track the algorithms and produce further aberrations and mutations)? Or, to put this another way, what use, for example, is an accelerationist who remains emotionally Luddite in their attitude to the complex affective make up of the subject today, or an inhuman thinker who remains blind to patriarchy? Just as we might ask what use is a left wing politics that refuses to engage with, and utilise, the conceptual and technological advances of capitalism or, indeed, a community that myopically focuses on the local and the immediate at the expense of understanding that the latter is *always also* the product of something more global (and must be engaged with on both those fronts)?

Capitalism, then, it seems to me, has to be addressed at both these levels, on both these fronts – either one remains inadequate on its own. Verticalism (abstraction) and horizontalism (localism) must be grasped in their interconnected character. It is here, in passing, that we might point to a limit to Guattari's own ethico-aesthetics that does not address the vertical, or super-molar, and, indeed, to the importance of the MAP (and accelerationism more generally) in that it has specifically introduced this scale into Left political discourse. It is in this sense that alongside my rejoinder I propose my own modest contribution to the accelerationist debate: the diagonal – as a line between the vertical and horizontal, and thus as attending to both, but also as a line – perhaps less straight? – that connects the two and, indeed, points to a somewhere else, an outside, which, as Deleuze once suggested (in his commentary on Foucault) is also located 'within' the very space of the subject itself – a folding-in of the outside (or 'the inside as an operation of the outside' as Deleuze puts it. [xxiv]

In relation to this diagonal we might also gesture, for example, towards the exploration and experimentation with different oscillations between the vertical and horizontal, different rhythms of thought and action – and, indeed, different bodily rhythms and refrains in and of themselves.[xxv] It is also here, to return to the point I made earlier, that we might also foreground the different temporalities – or durations – of subjectivity (and Henri Bergson, alongside Spinoza would be a key pre-cursor to this kind of work (albeit that his absence is a determining factor of accelerationism)).[xxvi] Although I would not want to simply replace Badiou with Deleuze (or Deleuze-Guattari), it is concepts such as becoming (which, after all, is another name for affect), and, indeed, the idea of the (Bergsonian) virtual, especially as laid out in *Difference and Repetition* (as being in reciprocal determination with the actual) that seems lacking in the MAP. And if a kind of becoming is there in the more recent writings of Land (as it certainly was in the 1990s), it is in such a technologically mediated account that the possibilities for real alternatives become occluded.

4. Concluding Remarks: Myth-Science

It is also with the diagonal – where an animal horizontal meets a more alien vertical – that we might find a role for art practice understood as a technology of the inhuman (the production of something that does not, as Jean-Francois Lyotard once put it, offer a reassuring image to and of a subjectivity already in place). But also as a practice that attends to, and experiments with, the different registers of subjectivity, including, crucially (but *not* exclusively), the affective. Here art's ability to produce that which was previously unseen and unheard, untimely images that 'speak' back to us – as if they came from an elsewhere – is especially important and takes on a political character (the imaging/imagining of alternatives). These other, perhaps stranger, image-worlds and fictions are an address not to us, but to something within us (or, to the collectivity that we are 'behind' any standardised molar identity).

The essay by Firestone is the only one in the Reader to significantly address this issue of aesthetic production, and even here the latter is seen as something to be overcome as technology renders the utopian function of art redundant. In fact, *#Accelerate* does not really have a place for art, tending to

position it as secondary – at best a precursor to the real business of rational thought (one gets the sense that art has been reduced to a folk image of itself). But art practice – especially today, but more generally since the expanded field of the 1960s (if not before) – is more than just this folk image. Indeed, it involves its own experiments and navigational strategies that parallel the rational and technological and even, in some respects (precisely in terms of the production of images and fictions) outrun it. It is also with art, or with aesthetic productions more generally, that we see real attempts at libidinal engineering – forms of synthetic life as it were. These more expanded and performative practices can involve the kind of conjunctions I mentioned above: non-human becomings (animal, plant … molecular) alongside, for example, other experiments in and with digitally produced sound and image and, indeed, with what has become known as a 'post-media aesthetics' in general. This is to say nothing of practices that might involve even stranger conjunctions between man and machine, especially around biology, coding and algorithms – or practices that might utilise the residual alongside the future-orientated. In these kinds of 'performative fictions' desire is invested and mobilised in a manner rarely encountered within more narrowly focused conceptual work. Might we even make the bold claim that art practice in this sense is itself Promethean (precisely, artifice)?

In this respect I am very much in agreement with Patricia Reed's critical commentary that ends the Reader, and which takes the MAP to task for, amongst other things, not attending to the constructive project of imagining alternatives (to 'eccentricate' as Reed puts it), and also, in fact, to the editors' own call (towards the end of their Introduction) for 'new science-fictional practices, if not necessarily in literary form' (p.37). Although, in the Introduction the claim is made that the more recent accelerationist treatises are a response to a situation in which the polemics and experiments of a 1990s cyberculture have been blunted, then assimilated, in web 2.0 and the general algorithmic character of social media (and, indeed, that these essays are intended as a mapping out of something more conceptual as a corrective to that other more aesthetic scene), nevertheless it remains the case that something has been lost in the sole focus on the rational (even when, as with Brassier and Negarestani, this might also imply a kind of human/inhuman subject). In fact, once again, my suspicion is that this omission is also apparent to the editors themselves. Why else end the Introduction – after an account of how a machine-produced 'transformative anthropology' requires a newly thought rational subject – with the claim, entirely correct in my opinion, that this latter subject will also need to be a vitalist one?

If reason and science are of the matheme, broadly construed, which is to say the Promethean impulse in its rational and technological form, then *Myth-Science* might be a name for the above kind of art practices that attend to a vitalism alongside the more artificial constructs of the human. [xxvii] This is the production of patheme-matheme assemblages in the guise of new images and fictions.[xxviii] Any accelerationism, it seems to me, will need to explore, and experiment with, this terrain – participate in the construction of its own myths and images (or accelerate the existing myth-making and image-constructing aspects of capitalism).[xxix] Might we also make the claim here that 1990s cyberculture was also involved in a kind of Myth-Science in this sense – or, at least, that a writer like Land was (perhaps still is?) aware that any scientific realism must be accompanied by something else – a fictioning (and accompanying libidinal investment) – in order that it have a transformative traction on the world, and especially on those who dwell within it (hence, precisely, hyperstition)?

If this Myth-Science is part of what a 'radical political response to capitalism' might look like then it seems to me that there is work to be done looking in detail at different myth-systems and, especially, at the possibilities of engagement with those less palatable on their own terms (I am thinking here of the mobilisation of myth on and by the Right, not least in Land's recent writing). These new synthetic images and alternative fictions (that, again, might well involve recourse to the residual) will also need to express and capture our collective desires. This project of reclaiming and then deploying a new collective – optical and libidinal – unconscious (away from the image banks and reservoirs of Facebook and Google – from narratives of careerism and competition, work time and leisure time) is the necessary accompaniment, it seems to me, to any focus on reason and rationality and operates as a corrective to any faith in technological development as itself the sole progenitor of new and different ways of being in the world.

(Thanks to David Burrows, Mark Fisher, Matthew Fuller, Theo Reeves-Evison and Josephine Berry-Slater for reading drafts of this article and offering many important insights, suggestions and corrections).

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Footnotes

[i] *Accelerate: the Accelerationist Reader*, R. Mackay and A. Avanessian (eds.), Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2014 (all non-footnoted page numbers refer to this). It goes without saying that the following critical review is both selective and necessarily reductive in its reading of what I consider to be an important publication – and that it does not attend in any detail to the economic arguments of accelerationism, or some other key issues, specifically those of gender bias and heteronormativity. Some of these have been addressed in other reviews and in various ongoing blog and web discussions; others will no doubt be addressed in Ben Noy's *Malign Velocities: Accelerationism and Capitalism*, London: Zero, 2014, and in the forthcoming special issue of *Inter/Alia: A Journal of Queer Studies* on *Accelerofeminisms*, edited by Rafal Majka and Michael O'Rourke. In its contemporary instantiation

accelerationism as a term was coined by Noys – perhaps accelerationism's chief critical interlocutor – whose own book, *The Persistence of the Negative: a Critique of Contemporary Continental Theory*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012, identifies an accelerationist (and affirmationist) strain of thought in writers such as Deleuze-Guattari and Lyotard. Just as accelerationism's pre-cursor, the 'movement' 'Speculative Realism', was first instantiated at a conference at Goldsmiths, so too accelerationism – as a movement, or scene – might be said to have been announced by a conference put together by Mark Fisher at Goldsmiths in 2010, involving Noys, Ray Brassier, Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams amongst others. Since then, as with Speculative Realism, the name/brand/slogan 'accelerationism' (and its twitter form *#accelerate*) has been the banner under which various symposia in Berlin and elsewhere have occurred, and, as with Speculative Realism, the internet has changed the speed of its development and dissemination as well as the constitution of its 'membership'.

[ii] We might ask the question here of whether Land can be simply equated with the Right – although he certainly utilises this opposition (of Right vs. Left) – insofar as he writes through parodic persona and tends towards a certain kind of mystic rather than political position (albeit traced through F. A. Hayek). In fact, to pre-empt some material to come below, could we see Land's project as a form of Myth-Science? Certainly, some of the writings (and links) to be found on his neoreactionary blog – *Outside In* (xenosystems.net/) – tend to fiction and fictioning (to Cthulu and Gnon) and to a kind of hyperstitional warfare waged against Cathedral and communism (a la *Paradise Lost*). I will be returning to Land and his own Myth-Science in my contribution to *Dark Glamour*, E. Keller and T. Matts (eds.), New York: Punctum, 2015.

[iii] Of all the texts in the Reader Negarestani's perhaps demands the closest reading and engagement. I put this off to another time, but make these points in passing: 1. The opposition drawn between 'stabilised communication through concepts' and 'chaotically unstable types of response and communication', that itself leads to a certain definition of the human and the privileging of the discursive, leaves out other forms of thought that might be said to operate between, or even outside of, these poles (for example Deleuze-Guattari's understanding of art as a form of thought, a bloc of affects, and Guattari's asignifying semiotics) (pp.431-2). A related question is what the more speculative types of reason, and 'abductive inference', might 'look' like (especially as the labour of the inhuman itself accelerates beyond familiar categories and concepts). Could it be, in fact, that this is also the terrain of art practice – itself understood as a heuristics? 3. A further connection with Land might be noted, insofar as the labour of the inhuman shares with teleoplexy both a certain autonomous and self-evaluating character, as well as a strange temporality: it retroactively operates back on the past/present from a future it has helped construct.

[iv] We might note the connections with Alain Badiou here and his proposal that a subject, as opposed to a human, is animated by a certain fidelity, or 'idea', that 'raises' them above the creaturely.

[v] For Brassier the category of finitude also includes birth and suffering – which, along with death, are typically portrayed as essential and existential givens – limits as it were, whether enabling or not (Brassier has Heidegger and his followers in mind). Brassier's argument is that the positing of an existential authenticity of the given (as in the 'human', 'life', *Dasein* or what have you) *against* the made means that Prometheanism (simply, for Brassier the idea that we can make ourselves and our world) is ruled out tout court or seen as a sin (involving, as it does the heresy of making, or attempting to make, the given). Brassier's particular take on finitude – and specifically his implicit idea of what suffering might be – could be fine-tuned somewhat insofar as from a certain perspective it is not suffering itself that is the given but, precisely, impermanence which, when encountered by a subject desiring permanence, causes suffering as a secondary effect. The possibility of a state of subjectivity that does not rail against impermanence (does not desire permanence), in particular one that does not identify itself as a separate self and thus does not suffer in this sense but, instead 'identifies' with the world in general (and its impermanence) – or, indeed, does not identify at all – might be said to be gestured gestured towards by Brassier in what he tantalisingly calls a 'subjectivism without selfhood' (although, no doubt, such a state is to be rationally and scientifically produced).

[vi] As with the Negarestani, Brassier's essay requires a longer response than possible in a review, but what can be said here is that the force of the Promethean project is expounded in its most philosophically rigorous form by Brassier as the desire to 're-engineer' the human itself (and, in this, as Brassier remarks, the former is both a direct successor to Enlightenment thought and practice, and is to be found in perhaps the pre-eminent Promethean thinker of modern times: Marx). Brassier suggests that it might be Badiou who opens the way for a continuing of this Promethean project in relation to the subject (albeit Badiou's account of the subject and event would need to be linked, for Brassier, to 'an analysis of the biological, economic, and historical processes that condition rational subjectivation' (p. 487)). But is it not also the case that the rational (and communist) Promethean project needs must be married with a more affective – libidinal – type of engineering (that deals with desire), and would it not be this kind of conjunction that really produces a radically different kind of subject?

[vii] A specifically technological variant of this Prometheanism, as for example in Ben Singleton's writings (including his essay in the Reader), is the impulse to escape planetary gravity and thus the ultimate 'prison': earth. Hence the accelerationist interest in the Russian cosmists and the inclusion in the Reader of the text by Veblen. As the Introduction to the Reader suggests, Singleton's interest in the technological 'platforms' that capitalism produces, and the concomitant navigational spaces opened up by them, parallels Negarestani and Brassier's own projects of conceptual navigation. In passing we might note here a figure important to *Anti-Oedipus* and one similarly interested in leaving the planet: William Burroughs. For the latter such an escape, however, was to be achieved not through the latest technological prosthesis (at least as presented by NASA) but by various aesthetic practices involving time-space disruptions: the cut-up, dream-machine and so forth (thanks to David Burrows for this point).

[viii] Both Negarestani and Brassier themselves point to their indebtedness to Land. The former in a footnote to the essay 'Drafting the Inhuman: Conjectures on Capitalism and Organic Necrocracy', in *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, L. Bryant, N. Srnicek and G. Harman (Eds.), Melbourne: re:press, 2011, pp.182-201; The latter in the Introduction, written with Robin McKay, to Land's Collective Writings, *Fanged Noumena*, Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2013, pp.1-54.

[ix] Coupled, as this was, with cybernetic theory, and, in particular a 'weaponised' Norbert Wiener.

[x] The texts from TechNET's flyers have been reprinted by *Datacide* – see: http://datacide.c8.com/magazine/datacide-twelve/. The following year's Virtual Futures, in 1996, was organised by, amongst others, Mark Fisher and Robin Mackay – both of whom were and are instrumental in the articulation of accelerationism – in terms of, respectively, organising the original accelerationism conference at Goldsmiths and co-editing the Reader itself.

[xi] In relation to this one might note Matthew Fuller's edited collection, *Unnatural: Techno-Theory for a Contaminated Culture,* London: Underground, 1994, that included the Land-Plant 'Cyberpositive' essay reprinted in the Reader and contains examples of the imagery and graphics in question, if not the whole Situationist-meets-digital aesthetic that was also found in the early *Collapse* fanzines of Warwick. Although not within the scope of this review essay, it would be interesting to trace, and reconstruct, the genealogy of this divergent trajectory – from the *Underground* magazine backwards to other scenes (to the Association of Autonomous Astronauts for example – themselves an interesting variation, and fictionalisation, on the accelerationist attention given to space travel), and from there to other ultra left/anarchist groups), not least as, from the evidence of the aforementioned edited collection, much of the libidinal intensity of the Warwick scene clearly came from this direction.

[xii] See the essay by Simon Reynolds, 'Renegade Academia: The Cybernetic Culture Research Unit', available at: http://energyflashbysimonreynolds.blogspot.co.uk/2..., and the more recent reflections by Robin Mackay, 'Nick Land – An Experiment in Inhumanism', *Umelec*, 1, 2012, available at: http://divus.cc/london/en/article/nick-land-ein-ex..., and Mark Fisher, 'Nick Land: Mind Games', *Dazed and Confused*, May 2011, available at: http://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article.... Fisher's essay, 'Terminator vs. Avatar', which involves a reflection on accelerationism as it was then, and is now, begins the final section of the Reader.

[xiii] It is worth noting here that the Negarestani's book, *Cyclonopedia*, Melbourne: re:press, 2008 (that evidences, at least in part, an indebtedness to Land's particular style of 'mad black Deleuzianism') also had this affective charge – and, indeed, performs its content in this sense (especially in its fictionalisation of theory).

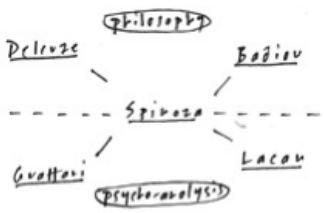
[xiv] There is also Patricia Reed's critical commentary in the Reader itself which points to a number of possible variations and further accelerations of the MAP, perhaps, most interestingly (at least in the context of this review) the call to 'fictionalise'. For Reed this is tied to the production of a new *demos*, or new collective will and, more generally to the role of belief within any radical politics. In relation to my own take on the MAP, Reed also points to the need both to attend to the 'distribution of affect' in any accelerationist agenda ('in equal partnership with calls for operational, technological and epistemic restructuration') (p.528), and to the more Guattarian idea of a 'commitment to an eccentric future' (although it is not entirely clear what Read has in mind here) (p. 527).

[xv] To a certain extent this omission is also characteristic of accelerationism's 'parent', Speculative Realism, that also involved a neglect of subjectivity as one of its constitutive, indeed, determining factors (though perhaps Ian Hamilton Grant comes closest, in his *Philosophies of Nature after Schelling*, London: Continuum, 2008, to mapping out an appropriate subject for Speculative Realism with his reading of Schelling and 'nature as subject/subject as nature'). For more on Grant, and the missing subject of Speculative Realism more generally, see my 'Conclusion: Composite Diagram and Relations of Adjacency', of *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite-Infinite Relation*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 203-222.

[xvi] Things are, of course, more complex and overdetermined than this, with a whole cast of philosophical precursors to accelerationism. Alongside Badiou, and in the distancing of Deleuze-Guattari, we might note, for example, for Negarestani, Wilfred Sellars and Robert Brandom; and for Brassier, Thomas Metzinger and Paul and Patricia Chruchland (indeed, we might suggest that accelerationism is at least partly characterised, philosophically speaking, as a synthesis between continental and analytic traditions (and departs from Speculative Realism, in this respect – as well as from those Object-Orientated trajectories that constitute the other main philosophical off-shoot from the former).

[xvii] Deleuze writes well on these new kinds of compound, or folds, in the appendix of his book on *Foucault*, S. Hand (trans.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, pp.124-32.

[xviii] In fact, I think the basic philosophical-psychoanalytic schema looks something like this:



There is more to be said here, about two different trajectories of French thought – the animal (on the left) and the formal (on the right) (and both Brassier and Badiou have written on this), but what we might note here is the figure of Spinoza as common root to both the philosophical and psychoanalytical categories, but also as purveyor of both the creaturely (affect) and the rational (reason), depending on what one reads of *The Ethics* and indeed *how* one reads it. We might map some of the accelerationist texts, in particular Negarestani and Brassier, between Badiou and Lacan (insofar as both are philosophical, but also attend to a kind of subject (albeit, a rational one) which

means they have an psychoanalytic aspect (though, crucially, no account of an unconscious)). This very partial and reductive schema (which leaves out any analytic philosophical precursors) nevertheless allows a more pointed reflection on what an accelerationist position would be on the left (of the diagram), between, precisely, Deleuze and Guattari (is it only CCRU and Land or are there other possibilities?). But also, pace Spinoza, what a composite subject might look like (or what *different* composite subjects might look like). One that is as much about living the matheme or assuming a name as it is about embracing the pathic/affective and becoming-anonymous/molecular.

[xix] See Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, P. Bains and J. Pefanis (trans.), Sydney: Power Publications, 1995, pp.1-32.

[xx] See 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', in *Problems in Materialism* and *Culture*, London: Verso, 1980, pp.31-49. What the MAP portrays as 'neo-primitivist localism' will no doubt involve both archaic (the past incorporated in to the present hegemony) *and* genuinely residual cultures (p.351).

[xxi] See, for example, Foucault's *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France 1981-82*, G. Burchell (trans.), F. Gros (ed.), London: Palgrave, 2005. The MAP does make some cryptic remarks regarding the need for 'self-mastery' that might be said to resonate with Foucault's Care of the Self: 'We need to posit a collectively controlled legitimate vertical authority in addition to distributed forms of sociality' (p. 358). It is worth pointing out that the idea of freedom that Foucault outlines – the product of a certain kind of work on the self by the self – has resonances with Negarestani's own definition of freedom as a labour of the in/human, albeit with Negarestani it is a specifically rule based – rational – work: 'Rather than liberation, the condition of freedom is a piecewise structural and functional accumulation and refinement that takes shape as a project of self-cultivation' (p.464).

[xxii] An example here, relating to more Situationist critiques, is Christopher Gray's essay 'Those Who Make Half a Revolution Only Dig their own Graves: The Situationists Since 1969', in *An Endless Adventure...An Endless Passion...An Endless Banquet: A Situationist Scrapbook*, I. Blazwick (ed.), London: Verso, 1989, pp.73-5. An indicative quote:

> What was basically wrong with the SI was that it focused exclusively on the intellectual critique of society. There was no concern whatsoever with either the emotions or the body. The SI thought you just had to show how the nightmare worked and everyone would wake up. Their quest was for the perfect formula, the magic charm that would disperse the evil spell … What needs understanding is the state of paralysis everyone is in. Certainly all conditioning comes from society but it is anchored in the body and mind of each individual, and that is where it must be dissolved. Ultimately the problem is *emotional*, not an intellectual one. (p.75)

[xxiii] Or, as Deleuze famously puts it: 'The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit beakers, so we can elude control' (see 'Control and Becoming', in *Negotiations*, 1972-1990, M. Joughin (trans.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p.175).

[xxiv] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, S. Hand (trans.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p. 97.

[xxv] Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, S. Elden and G. Moore (trans.), London: Continuum, 2004, would also be an important theoretical resource here – insofar as Lefebvre was interested in how the body's own rhythms intersected with capitalism and technology, but also with more planetary, even cosmic systems. The body is figured here as a complex and crucial research tool/site/measure (thanks again to David Burrows for this reference).

[xxvi] Bergson, no doubt, is who Negarestani, Brassier and others have in mind when they contrast the private thinker-mystic – and idea of intuition – to a rule based and reasonable sapience that grounds a collective 'us'. The question here is whether Bergsonian intuition, or indeed Deleuze-Guattarian becoming, is private and individualistic in this sense, or whether they are an instance of the world thinking through us – or, more simply, a connection between 'us' and the world.

[xxvii] The term Myth-Science is taken from Sun Ra, and Afrofuturism more generally (see Kodwo Eshun's discussion in *More Brilliant than the Sun*: *Adventures in Sonic Fiction*, London: Quartet, 1998). Mike Kelley, in an essay on Olaf Fahlstrom ('Myth Science', *Oyvind Fahlstrom: The Installations*, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 1995, pp.19-27) links the term more particularly to the fictioning aspect of contemporary art practice, especially in its expanded form.

[xxviii] David Burrows and I have recently attempted to map out some of this terrain more analytically. See our 'S/Z or Art as Non-Schizoanalysis', in *Schizoanalysis and Art*, I. Buchanan and L. Simpson (eds.), London: Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 253-78.

[xxix] In relation to this see my essay 'Art Practice as Fictioning (or, myth-science)', *diakron*, No. 1, forthcoming (available at: http://www.diakron.dk).

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Naxos • 3 years ago

"Yesterday I had two reasons to celebrate Simon O'Sullivan's article The missing subject of accelerationism, which is more like a large hyper-referential review of the #Accelerate Reader, just recently published in Mute Magazine. The first reason was mainly because with it, he offers a schizoanalytic critique about the 'ism' of acceleration in the direction of what I have prefigured since last April as a molar acceleration. The second reason was because with its double-shade title he points out not only to an important theme which molar accelerationists have lost –and still cannot find due to their hasty appropriation of Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus–, but also to what they have failed to consider as the prime non-ideological object of acceleration, namely: the production of subjectivities –a failure which leaded me to write about molecular acceleration and the production of intensities and that I have also pointed out